NEWS

Winchester delegation supports passage of law to lower prescription drug costs

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Winchester's state delegation joined colleagues in the Massachusetts Legislature to pass comprehensive reforms to lower the cost of prescription drugs at the pharmacy counter and improve oversight of the state's pharmaceutical industry. FILE PHOTO

The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Jason Lewis:

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State Sens. Jason Lewis and Pat Jehlen and state Reps. Michael Day and Michelle Ciccolo joined their colleagues in the Massachusetts Legislature to pass comprehensive reforms to lower the cost of prescription drugs at the pharmacy counter and improve oversight of the state's pharmaceutical industry.

An act relative to pharmaceutical access, costs, and transparency takes bold action to lower or eliminate out-of-pocket costs and ensure access to life-saving medications by requiring health insurers to offer price relief for prescription drugs used to treat diabetes, asthma, and certain heart conditions.

This bill further brings down costs by ensuring that consumers are not charged a cost-sharing amount, such as a co-pay, if it would be cheaper for them to purchase the drug without using their insurance.

Approximately 9% of Massachusetts residents have diagnosed diabetes; 6% of adults over 35 have heart disease; and more than 10% of residents live with asthma. This bill is particularly critical for residents of color, who disproportionately face chronic illnesses. Over 12% of Black residents live with diabetes and nearly 14% of Black adults live with asthma.

"Working to expand access to quality, affordable healthcare has always been one of my top priorities in the Legislature," said Lewis. "I'm proud to support this critical legislation that makes life-saving drugs more affordable and accessible for patients, and holds pharmaceutical companies, insurers, and pharmacy benefit managers more accountable for their actions."

"No one should worry about the cost of their medications as they are often essential to our overall health and well-being," said Jehlen. "I am happy to help pass legislation that can make prescription drugs affordable. They often pose a burden for people living on a low or fixed income.

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"Massachusetts is the hub for medical innovation and we provide cutting edge health care, yet our residents struggle daily to afford necessary medications," said Day. "I was proud to support this legislation that will increase transparency and manage prescription costs for our residents."

"Cost should never be a barrier to accessing important and needed medications and this bill makes significant progress towards a more equitable and accessible health care system for all, including by increasing oversight and setting limits on out-of-pocket costs," said Ciccolo.

Key provisions of this legislation include:

• Lowering consumer prescription drug costs for diabetes, asthma, and certain heart conditions by requiring insurers to eliminate cost-sharing requirements for one generic drug and to cap co-payments on one brand-name drug at $25 per 30-day supply.

• Increasing oversight of pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) by authorizing the state Division of Insurance to license and regulate PBMs, which play a major role in determining how prescription drugs are tiered and priced on insurance plans.

• Establishing the Office for Pharmaceutical Policy and Analysis within the Health Policy Commission (HPC) to analyze trends and publish an annual report with recommendations for strategies to promote affordability, enhance medication access, and mitigate pharmaceutical spending growth.

• Requiring pharmaceutical manufacturers and PBMs to provide public testimony on the factors that influence drug costs and allowing these factors to be taken into account by the HPC to identify how to imp
and reduce costs for patients.

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After final passage in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, Gov. Maura Healey signed the bill into law on Jan. 8, 2025.

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Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

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Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

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Sen. Jason Lewis, Mass. Senate strengthen fair housing protections for renters, buyers

The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Jason Lewis: State Sen. Jason Lewis joined his colleagues in the Massachusetts Senate to pass legislation that protects residents from discrimination in the housing market as the Trump administration abandons its enforcement of the federal Fair Housing Act. Illegal discrimination continues

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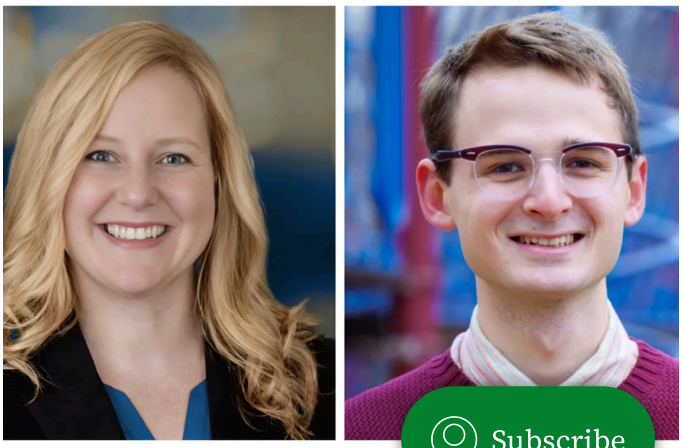

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Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

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FEATURES

'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents "Chicago: Teen Edition," a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

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Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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